SOUNDTRANSIT

Motion No. M2026-44

2027 State Legislative Agenda

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:
Executive Committee	11/05/2026	Recommend to Board
Board	11/19/2026	Final Action

Staff name:	Staff title:
Calli Knight	Agency Chief of Staff
Penny Lipsou	Agency Deputy Chief of Staff
Jessyn Farrell	**Government and Community Relations Executive Director**

Proposed action

Adopts the Sound Transit 2027 State Legislative Agenda and directs staff to advance its priorities and evaluate and engage in issues consistent with the agenda. These priorities support safe and reliable regional high-capacity transit operations, reduced costs, accelerated project delivery, and increased agency financial capacity to ensure full delivery of the voter-approved ST3 system plan.

Key features summary

This action would authorize Sound Transit staff to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the upcoming state legislative session:

- Ensure the safe and cost-effective delivery of Sound Transit capital projects and transit operations.
- Support legislation that enable Sound Transit to fully utilize financing tools such as 75-year, low-interest loans through the federal TIFIA program.
- Build on passage of SB 6309 and continue to speed up permitting with a comprehensive Transit Construction Permitting Reform package that improves processes, saves time, and cuts costs.
- Support policies that improve passenger experience, safety and operational reliability such as legislation that limits copper wire theft.
- Develop and retain a strong, vibrant workforce in Washington State.
- Develop and expand availability of affordable housing and support Sound Transit's transit-oriented development program.
- Support policies that enable Sound Transit to improve contracting methods.
- Protect state funding to support delivery of transit statewide, as well as Sound Transit projects and access to Sound Transit services.
- Oppose legislation that increases the costs of transit improvements and services, negatively impacts funding, or otherwise impairs the agency's ability to deliver the voter-approved regional high-capacity transit program.

Background

The Board annually considers a State Legislative Agenda, which establishes agency priorities for Board members, staff, and contract lobbyist engagement in Olympia. In addition to assuring the safe, efficient, and reliable delivery of high-capacity transit operations and capital projects, this year's agenda focuses on implementation of the work streams laid out in Attachment B of Resolution No. R2026-11, which requires the Agency to identify and implement opportunities to save costs, accelerate project delivery, and increase agency financial capacity to ensure full delivery of the voter-approved ST3 system plan.

This action would authorize Sound Transit Board members, staff, and consultants to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the upcoming state legislative session:

1. **Ensure the safe and cost-effective delivery of Sound Transit capital projects and transit operations.** A thriving economy relies on a thriving transit system. The ongoing expansion of high-capacity transit in Central Puget Sound reduces travel times and connects communities. It creates more opportunities for housing close to frequent, affordable and reliable transportation and helps connect more people to more opportunities.

   The Board requests that the Legislature partner with Sound Transit on solutions to support delivery of the capital program, such as approaches that accelerate project delivery or expand Sound Transit's financial capacity, and support safe, efficient, reliable service delivery.

2. **Support policies that enable Sound Transit to fully utilize existing financing tools and/or create additional financing capacity to assist with delivery of ST3 projects.** Sound Transit seeks authority for more flexible project financing tools. State law currently limits the agency to 40-year borrowing terms, despite federal low-interest TIFIA loans supporting up to 75-year terms under certain conditions. Allowing Sound Transit to access below-market-rated loans of up to 75 years would give the agency additional flexibility to respond to current and future market conditions, which could help deliver projects and benefit more riders sooner.

3. **Streamline permitting to save costs and speed up project delivery.** Permitting delays can increase project costs and extend delivery timelines. Sound Transit will seek additional transit construction permitting reforms that build on the passage of SB 6309 in the 2026 legislative session. Additional reforms would better enable Sound Transit to partner with jurisdictions to speed up permitting processes and deliver projects faster and more efficiently, without sacrificing critical local interests.

4. **Protecting critical infrastructure and delivering reliability for passengers.** Support legislation that improves passenger experience, safety, and operational reliability, such as legislation to reduce copper wire theft by providing stronger accountability for scrap purchasing and additional law enforcement tools.

   Additionally, support policies that enable Sound Transit's implementation of a fare gates pilot project.

5. **Develop and retain a strong, vibrant workforce in Washington State.** As Sound Transit continues to implement the most ambitious transit expansion in the United States, there is a need for a trained workforce to sustain the development, operations, and maintenance of the agency's infrastructure and service through both workforce development and retention. Sound Transit will work alongside our labor partners to protect and expand funding for pre-apprentice and apprenticeship programs.

6. **Develop and expand availability of affordable housing and support Sound Transit's transit-oriented development program.** The Puget Sound region's shortage of available, affordable housing creates limitations and obstacles for residents to access jobs, education, and essential services. To date, Sound Transit has supported the creation of more than 3,800 housing units, including more than 2,800 units as affordable, in various stages of creation with its development partners. Sound Transit supports legislative efforts to advance transit-oriented development through zoning and parking reforms, expanding affordable housing resources, funding local infrastructure to support redevelopment, expanding options to create and capture value in station areas to support transit, and other solutions to meet the Puget Sound region's housing and community development needs.
7. **Support policies that enable Sound Transit to improve contracting methods.** As Sound Transit delivers its capital program, the agency must remain a leader in innovative delivery methods and contracting models. Sound Transit Board seeks legislative authority to modernize contracting methods and meet industry best practices.
8. **Protect state funding to support transit service across Washington State, as well as delivery of Sound Transit projects and services.** Sound Transit will strongly advocate to prevent any funding rollbacks that would threaten state transit funding programs.
9. **Oppose legislation that increases the costs of transit improvements and services or otherwise impairs the agency's ability to deliver the voter-approved regional high-capacity transit program.** The Sound Transit Board opposes legislation that would negatively alter the oversight, planning, financing, construction, delivery and operation of Sound Transit projects and services.

Fiscal information

This proposed action does not have a budget or financial impact to the agency or any of its programs. Advocacy of the State Legislative Program is fully funded through the annual Executive Department budget.

Disadvantaged and small business participation

Not applicable to this action.

Public involvement

Not applicable for this action.

Time constraints

Sound Transit's interests are better served at the State Legislature if the Board of Directors adopts a State Legislative Program as early as possible in advance of the 2027 legislative session that begins January 11th, 2027. Delaying adoption would limit effective advocacy by reducing opportunities offered by pre-session meetings and work sessions.

Environmental review – LS 10/15/2026

Legal review – JCN 10/30/2026

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A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting the Sound Transit 2027 State Legislative Agenda and directing staff to advance its priorities and evaluate and engage in issues consistent with the agenda. These priorities support safe and reliable regional high-capacity transit operations, reduced costs, accelerated project delivery, and increased agency financial capacity to ensure full delivery of the voter-approved ST3 system plan.

Background

This action would authorize Sound Transit staff to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the upcoming state legislative session: Ensure the safe and cost-effective delivery of Sound Transit capital projects and transit operations; support legislation that enable Sound Transit to fully utilize financing tools such as 75-year, low-interest loans through the federal TIFIA program; build on passage of SB 6309 and continue to speed up permitting with a comprehensive Transit Construction Permitting Reform package that improves processes, saves time, and cuts costs; support policies that improve passenger experience, safety and operational reliability such as legislation that limits copper wire theft; develop and retain a strong, vibrant workforce in Washington State; develop and expand availability of affordable housing and support Sound Transit's transit-oriented development program; support policies that enable Sound Transit to improve contracting methods; protect state funding to support delivery of transit statewide, as well as Sound Transit projects and access to Sound Transit services; and oppose legislation that increases the costs of transit improvements and services, negatively impacts funding, or otherwise impairs the agency's ability to deliver the voter-approved regional high-capacity transit program.

The Board annually considers a State Legislative Agenda, which establishes agency priorities for Board members, staff, and contract lobbyist engagement in Olympia. In addition to assuring the safe, efficient, and reliable delivery of high-capacity transit operations and capital projects, this year's agenda focuses on implementation of the work streams laid out in Attachment B of Resolution No. R2026-11, which requires the Agency to identify and implement opportunities to save costs, accelerate project delivery, and increase agency financial capacity to ensure full delivery of the voter-approved ST3 system plan.

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  Additionally, support policies that enable Sound Transit's implementation of a fare gates pilot project.
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- **Develop and expand availability of affordable housing and support Sound Transit's transit-oriented development program.** The Puget Sound region's shortage of available, affordable housing creates limitations and obstacles for residents to access jobs, education, and essential services. To date, Sound Transit has supported the creation of more than 3,800 housing units, including more than 2,800 units as affordable, in various stages of creation with its development partners. Sound Transit supports legislative efforts to advance transit-oriented development through zoning and parking reforms, expanding affordable housing resources, funding local infrastructure to support redevelopment, expanding options to create and capture value in station areas to support transit, and other solutions to meet the Puget Sound region's housing and community development needs.
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- **Protect state funding to support transit service across Washington State, as well as delivery of Sound Transit projects and services.** Sound Transit will strongly advocate to prevent any funding rollbacks that would threaten state transit funding programs.
- **Oppose legislation that increases the costs of transit improvements and services or otherwise impairs the agency's ability to deliver the voter-approved regional high-capacity transit program.** The Sound Transit Board opposes legislation that would negatively alter the oversight, planning, financing, construction, delivery and operation of Sound Transit projects and services

Motion

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the Sound Transit 2027 State Legislative Agenda is adopted and staff is directed to advance its priorities and evaluate and engage in issues consistent with the agenda. These priorities support safe and reliable regional high-capacity transit operations, reduced costs, accelerated project delivery, and increased agency financial capacity to ensure full delivery of the voter-approved ST3 system plan.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on November 19, 2026.

Dave Somers
Board Chair

Attest:

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator